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Advancement of Women

Implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women and of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"

Security Council
Fifty-seventh year

Letter dated 9 December 2002 from the Permanent Representatives of Chile and Denmark to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

We, the Permanent Representatives of Chile and Denmark, also representing the participants from the European Union, have the honour to transmit herewith a report of the Conference, held in Santiago on 4 and 5 November 2002, on the role of women in peacekeeping operations (see annex). The meeting, which was attended by participants from 35 Member States and 10 non-governmental organizations, expressed a strong commitment to the enhancement of the role of women in peacekeeping operations and peace processes.

We should be grateful if you could arrange for the present letter and its annex to be circulated as a document of the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly, under agenda items 102 and 103, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Juan Gabriel **Valdés**
Permanent Representative of Chile to the United Nations

(*Signed*) Ellen Margrethe **Løj**
Permanent Representative of Denmark to the United Nations

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Annex to the letter dated 9 December 2002 from the Permanent Representatives of Chile and Denmark to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Report of the conference on the role of women in peacekeeping operations

Santiago, Chile, 4 and 5 November 2002

With the participation of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Chile, Mrs. Soledad Alvear, the Minister Director of National Service for Women of Chile, Mrs. Adriana Delpiano, the Minister of Defence of Chile, Mrs. Michelle Bachelet, and the Minister of Defence of Denmark, Mr. Svend Aage Jensby, a biregional conference on the role of women in peacekeeping operations was held in Santiago on 4 and 5 November 2002.

The conference was the result of discussions held at the Summits between the Heads of State and Government of Latin America, the Caribbean and the European Union in Rio in 1999 and in Madrid in 2002, and was organized through joint cooperation between the Governments of Chile and Denmark and the European Union, with the primary objective of enhancing cooperation in the two regions through an interchange of views on gender issues and the role of women in peacekeeping operations and peace processes.

While originally conceived as a gathering of a group of experts, the meeting was attended by representatives from various sectors of the participating countries. A total of 100 participants attended the meeting, representing 35 Member States and 10 non-governmental organizations. Seventeen speakers presented papers on the gender perspective from the global and regional viewpoints.

The conference focused mainly on the critical role played by women in peace-building and situations of armed conflict, where women and girls constitute the majority of victims.

On the basis of findings and opinion polls obtained in the course of the meeting, a series of preliminary recommendations were made on peace-related issues, which served as a working document for the participants at the conference.

The following list of recommendations were submitted for consideration by Member States and non-governmental organizations:

- Promote the participation of women in peacekeeping operations and achieve equal status for men and women in these operations by 2015, as recommended in the report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations;
- Take concrete action to increase the representation of women as military observers in order to reach the overall target of up to one third over, as a minimum deadline, a two-year period;
- Member States should provide an updated list of qualified women candidates, including military as well as civilian candidates, to serve in peace support operations and at high-level positions;

- Member States should increase concrete actions to implement the objectives of the first World Conference on Women, held in Mexico in 1975;
- Create and promote women's networks in uniform to ensure the integration of gender perspectives in the different aspects of the work of peacekeeping missions;
- Continue to broaden the interchange of experiences and ideas, with a view to making formal recommendations at a second conference to be organized in the near future.

Because of the importance of the issues discussed at the conference, it will be included as part of the agenda of the next Meeting of Defence Ministers of the Americas, which is to be held in Santiago.